

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

### BOARD OF FORESTRY

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1450  
Anchorage, AK 99501

April 4, 2011

Greg Jones, Executive Director  
Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office  
718 L Street, Suite 202  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Mr. Jones,

The Alaska Board of Forestry is pleased to convey its support for a land exchange between the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the U.S. Forest Service to resolve forest land management conflicts in southeast Alaska. The Board of Forestry provides a forum to discuss and resolve issues on forest practices and management of forests on state land (AS 41.17.947(b)). Board members represent diverse constituencies – the timber, fishing, and mining industries, Native Corporations, professional foresters and fish and wildlife biologists, and environmental and recreational organizations.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office manages Trust land and natural resource assets throughout the state of Alaska for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust). In 1956, Congress passed the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act, entitling the Territory of Alaska to one million acres of federal land to be used for revenue generation to support mental health services in Alaska.

The Trust Authority is a state corporation and manages the Trust in perpetuity for the benefit of Alaskans with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chronic alcoholism, and Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. The Trust operates much like a private foundation, using its resources to team with the Alaska Legislature in funding the state's mental health program.

The Trust owns about 20,000 acres of land that are primarily timber lands in and around the Southeast Alaska cities, towns and villages of Skagway, Juneau, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, Meyers Chuck, and Ketchikan. The Board of Forestry is aware of conflicts between residents of these Southeast Alaska communities who want forest land left undisturbed and the Trust's need to harvest timber on their land for revenue generation.

To meet the mission of The Trust and to place these high value Trust lands into the public domain, the Trust Land Office is proposing a value-for-value land exchange with the U.S. Forest Service. An exchange would trade Trust lands around communities for USFS lands that are suitable for sustainable commercial forest management activities.

The Board supports a land exchange between the U.S. Forest Service and the Trust. The Board also recommends that the Trust Land Office initiate a public campaign effort to work with and inform residents of the affected communities and other Alaskans concerning the land exchange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John C. Maisch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John "Chris" Maisch C.F., State Forester  
Chair, Alaska Board of Forestry

Cc: Beth Pendleton, USFS Region 10 Forester  
Jim Reeves, USFS Deputy Chief for Research  
Joel Holtrop, USFS Deputy Chief for National Forest System  
Dan Sullivan, Commissioner DNR  
Trevor Fulton, Legislative Liaison DNR  
Heather Brakes, Legislative Director Office of the Governor  
John Katz, Director State and Federal Relations Office of the Governor  
Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Senator Mark Begich  
Congressman Don Young

Alaska Board of Forestry

- ♦ Ron Wolfe, Alaska Native Corporations
- ♦ Eric Nichols, Forest Industry Trade Association
- ♦ Wayne Nicolls, Non-governmental Professional Forester
- ♦ Rob Bosworth, Environmental Organization
- ♦ Erin McLarnon, Recreation Organization
- ♦ Mark Vinsel, Commercial Fisherman's Organization
- ♦ Jeff Foley, Mining Organization
- ♦ Matt Cronin, Non-governmental Professional Fish/Wildlife Biologist